

# 2010 Spring Flood Outlook Talking Points

## National Weather Service—Des Moines, Iowa

March 5, 2010

**Spring flood outlooks from NWS Des Moines cover the NWS Des Moines service area.** The NWS Des Moines service area includes the following rivers and their tributaries in north central, central and south central Iowa: Iowa, Cedar, Skunk, Des Moines, Raccoon, Nishnabotna, 102, Thompson and Chariton Rivers.

Below is the schedule for this year's official spring flood outlooks for NWS Des Moines.

- 1st Outlook: Friday, January 29, 2010.
- 2nd Outlook: Friday, February 19, 2010.
- 3rd Outlook: Friday, March 5, 2010.
- 4th Outlook (Optional): Friday, March 26, 2010.

The outlooks for the NWS Des Moines service area will be published on its Web page when they become available (<http://www.weather.gov/desmoines>). We update our probability outlooks their respective service areas every month of the year, around the 1st of every month.

For more information, visit our Web site. You may also contact Jeff Zogg at [Jeff.Zogg@noaa.gov](mailto:Jeff.Zogg@noaa.gov) or at 515-270-4501 x493 for more information.

### Flood outlook highlights

- **There is a continued high risk of significant flooding. The risk of major flooding has increased even higher since the second outlook on February 19th, mainly in the Des Moines River basin above Saylorville Reservoir.** The risk of reaching flood stage has changed very little at most locations. The areas of most concern for significant flooding include the Des Moines, Raccoon, Iowa and Cedar River basins, especially across the northwest half of the Des Moines service area. The risk of flooding is much above normal at many locations across the entire Des Moines service area.
- **The time period when flooding is most likely extends from the middle third of March into late April.**
- **There is an above normal risk of flash flooding, especially from ice jams.** This outlook does not take into account flooding from ice jams. Flooding from ice jams would be above and beyond the flooding indicated in this outlook.
- **The risk of flooding and flash flooding will be higher than normal after the snow melts, and will remain higher than normal at least into late spring.** Heavy rainfall may result

in significant flooding. It will be more important than normal to closely monitor for the risk of flooding, even after the snow pack is gone.

- **We may issue another updated outlook on Friday, March 26 2010. We will not issue the updated outlook if flooding is underway or likely within a few days of March 26th.** Whenever flooding is underway or likely within a few days, refer to our Hazardous Weather Outlook, flood watches, flood warnings and 7-day river forecasts for the latest information. All of this information is available on our Web site.

### Other thoughts

- **Most homeowners' insurance policies do not cover flood-related losses.** To cover flood-related losses, flood insurance must typically be purchased. This is in addition to homeowners insurance. Some people think it's best to forgo flood insurance and instead get disaster assistance. It's important to know that disaster assistance, if it's available, is typically a loan that you must repay with interest. **In most cases, flood insurance requires a 30-day waiting period before it becomes effective.** Homeowners can visit the Web site <http://www.floodsmart.gov/> for more information, or contact their insurance agent/company.
- **Will this year see a repeat of the flooding in 2008 or 1993?** Not necessarily. We cannot automatically link conditions this year to severe flooding. Comparing conditions now to the flooding in 2008 and 1993 is like comparing apples to oranges.
  - The high-end, catastrophic flooding we saw in 2008 and 1993 was mainly the result of repeated heavy rainfall during the summer. It was not so much due to the winter snow, soil and river level conditions. Although soil moisture and river levels were running high by the end of winter in both years, the heavy warm season rainfall was the main culprit. Even if soil moisture and stream levels were near normal in both 2008 and 1993, we would have still seen high-end flooding those years.
  - It is important to keep in mind, though, that we are "primed" for significant flooding this spring. The risk of significant flooding is high. Since snow pack, soil moisture and rivers are running high, Mother Nature will be very unforgiving if rapid snowmelt or heavy rainfall occur. Unfortunately, we do not see any strong signals indicating tendencies of temperatures or precipitation this spring. The National Weather Service will continue monitoring the situation closely and advise of any short-term flooding risks.

—Prepared by Jeff Zogg, Senior Hydrologist/NWS Des Moines, IA